



Mishawaka Communicator



Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life, and inspiring pride in our community.

Dave Wood, Mayor

www.mishawaka.in.gov

January 2015

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



The City of Mishawaka is Debt Free!!

For the first time in over 100 years, the Princess City begins 2015 with no General Obligation Bond (GOB) debt after making our final payments in late December. GOB debt is particularly important because it is paid back with property tax revenue. We paid off our latest bonds, originally issued between 2005-2007 for \$12.3 million to finance various projects such as the City's radio communication system and major park improvements, several years early.

Back in 2012, I announced one of the major initiatives of my administration: the ambitious goal of paying off our debt early and becoming debt free as a means of insulating the city against unforeseen circumstances that cannot be anticipated such as economic downturns, emergencies, state funding source changes, etc. A debt free status, though rare among our peers, is indicative of our fiscal responsibility. When you look at fiscal health, whether you are a country, state, or city, there are growing disparities between the haves and have-nots. Those with healthy budgets tend to trend healthier and those with a weak budget trend weaker. This only makes sense. As an individual, family, or businesses, what type of community do you want to live, work and invest in?

Our goal of paying off GOB debt was unusual as most cities in the state have GOB debt. According to the latest state report, there are 191 Indiana communities carrying debt that is paid back with property tax revenue. Close to home, the City of Chicago's credit rating has been downgraded on fears that the city's massive and growing unfunded liabilities threaten the city's fiscal solvency. The City of Detroit's well-publicized bankruptcy proceedings continue to generate news while also impacting their ability to provide even

(continued on next page)



Facts About the Flu

Health Information from Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

Is it a cold or is it the flu? Because they share many of the same symptoms, many people confuse colds and the flu. But while you can have a cold several times each year, most people get the flu only once every several years.

What we commonly call "the flu" is an infection with one of the influenza virus strains. The influenza virus is transmitted by droplet particles when someone who has the virus coughs, sneezes or talks. The virus attaches to cells in your nose or throat and enters the body. The tricky part with influenza is that people can be infectious and not be aware of it. While most healthy adults are infectious a day before symptoms begin, children can be infectious six days before the onset of symptoms. Those with compromised immune systems can shed the virus for weeks, which means that they can continue to spread the virus during that time. Infection-prevention interventions are aimed at stopping the spread.

(continued on next page)

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Jan 1	New Year's Day Holiday (City Offices Closed)
Jan 6	ND Hockey "Practice on the Pond" - 5pm (Merrifield Ice Rink)
Feb 28	Daddy Daughter Dance - 7-9pm (Mishawaka FOP)
Apr 11	Dances for a Festive Night
Apr 12	Michiana Concert Band Spring Concert
Apr 29	Youth Classes' Showcase

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Beginning January 23rd, IRS-certified VITA tax preparers will prepare and e-file your taxes for FREE!

CALL 2-1-1 to schedule your appointment or schedule online at www.uwsjc.org/vita.html

ONLINE ACCESS

The City of Mishawaka maintains an online presence and can be found on the web at <http://mishawaka.in.gov>.

Find us on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/cityofmishawaka>

Remember, the current issue of the Mishawaka Communicator is always available as of the 1st of every month at <http://mishawaka.in.gov/communicator>

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood *(continued)*

basic services to its residents. Here in Indiana, the City of Carmel has nearly \$1 billion in debt or roughly \$12,500 per citizen.

While becoming debt free is a solid foundation for long-term financial health, we are not out of the woods yet. Further planning is necessary to weather the property tax caps reductions coming in 2019 that will once again reduce the City's property tax revenue. Property tax reductions help out property owners, but continued cuts make it more difficult for local government to fund and provide the services you have come to expect. As we did in our mission to become debt free, we will carefully plan and execute all steps necessary to remain financially sound for years to come while at the same time providing world-class service.

Being debt free is good news on many fronts.

I believe that being debt-free is itself a calculated investment that will place the City in a favorable position not only to support our existing families and businesses, but will be an obvious indicator of our fiscal health for prospective investors. As the economy continues to improve, Mishawaka continues to be well-positioned to take advantage of our financial position and build our future on our past successes.

Our citizens will see benefits as well in the form of a modest property tax cut. On your tax bill you will no longer see a line item for Municipal Bond debt. At the rate of .0466/\$100 of assessed value, a home assessed at \$100,000 will see a tax reduction of \$46.60.

Getting there was not easy. Thanks to the help of then City Controller, Yvonne Milligan, we developed a plan to make extra payments from within our budget using only available funds while not going out for more credit or cutting existing services. I would also like to thank current City Controller Rebecca Miller and City Attorney Larry Meteiver for processing the early debt payoff, and the Mishawaka City Council for approving the appropriations in the budget to allow for the early debt payoff. This initiative is yet another example of good people working together to accomplish extraordinary things. The Princess City is once again leading the way!

Mayor Dave Wood



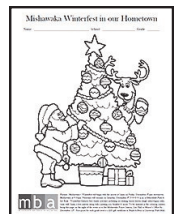
Facts About the Flu *(continued)*

- **Clean your hands frequently** and always before you eat.
- **Cover your cough** with a tissue and throw away after use. Carry hand sanitizer with you. Use it often during the day.
- **Cough into your sleeve** if a tissue is not available.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** Although influenza does not live outside the body for very long, it can be spread from contact with high-touch areas such as doorknobs.
- **Avoid sharing food, utensils, cups or bottles.** Avoid sharing personal items.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months and older should **receive the influenza vaccine.**

The symptoms of influenza are usually a sudden onset of fever, aches, chills and extreme tiredness. If you have these symptoms, seek medical attention. You may be able to shorten the illness with prescription medicine.

Winterfest Coloring Contest Winners

The annual coloring contest for the Mishawaka Winterfest, sponsored by the Mishawaka Business Association, was judged by Mayor Wood and his family on December 15, 2014. A winner was selected in each grade level, K-6, received a \$50.00 Gift Certificate to Build-A-Bear at University Park Mall.



Kindergarten	Layten Anglemeyer	Emmons School			
1st Grade	Maddie Dill	Mishawaka Catholic	4th Grade	Elizabeth Krueger	LaSalle School
2nd Grade	Lucas Simons	Beiger School	5th Grade	Hope Ward	Liberty School
3rd Grade	Lorali Hensel	Hums School	6th Grade	Isabella Kukla	Liberty School

Send your questions, comments, or concerns to communicator_feedback@mishawaka.in.gov